

Section 7 – Coordination of Local Planning

Contents of this Section

- 7.1 IFR Requirement for Coordination of Local Mitigation Planning
- 7.2 State process for developing local mitigation plans
- 7.3 Process by which local plans are reviewed, coordinated, linked to the State Plan
- 7.4 Criteria for prioritizing jurisdictions to receive funds under existing programs

Section	What has been updated?
7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IFR language pertaining to plan updates was added.
7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describes status of, and process for, developing local mitigation plans.• Describes status of, and process for, updating local mitigation plans.• Describes the process and timeframe for local mitigation plan approval and adoption.
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the initial plan, this section was a subsection to Section 7.2; however, there was sufficient new information to incorporate in the Update that it warranted creating a new section• Describes how local information was incorporated during initial plan development• Describes process for reviewing and incorporating all local plans into this update• Describes plans to further integrate, coordinate, and link the State and local plans
7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This section was revised to reflect changes in prioritization processes developed after Hurricane Katrina

7.1 Interim Final Rule Requirements for Coordination of Local Mitigation Planning

The Interim Final Rule (IFR) Subsection 201.4 (c) (4) requires the State Hazard Mitigation Plan to include section on the coordination of local mitigation planning.

“(The State Hazard Mitigation Plan shall include a) section on the *Coordination of Local Mitigation Planning* that includes the following:

- (i) A description of the State process to support, through funding and technical assistance, the development of local mitigation plans.
- (ii) A description of the State process and timeframe by which local plans will be reviewed, coordinated and linked to the State Mitigation Plan.
- (iii) Criteria for prioritizing communities and local jurisdictions that would receive planning and project grants under available funding programs, which should include consideration for communities with the highest risk, repetitive loss properties, and most intense development pressures. Further, that for non-planning grants, a principal criterion for prioritizing grants shall be the extent to which benefits are maximized according to a cost benefit review of proposed projects and their associated costs.”

7.2 Development and Update of Local Mitigation Plans

This section describes the ongoing efforts to assist in the completion of the development of local mitigation plan as well as the initial efforts being undertaken to begin the plan update process at the local level.

7.2.1 Development of Local Hazard Mitigation Plans

Because the IFR had set an approval deadline of November 1, 2004 for the initial State Hazard Mitigation Plan and the initial local hazard mitigation plans, all local plans and the State Plan were initially developed concurrently. The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) made a concerted effort to assist with local plan development by providing:

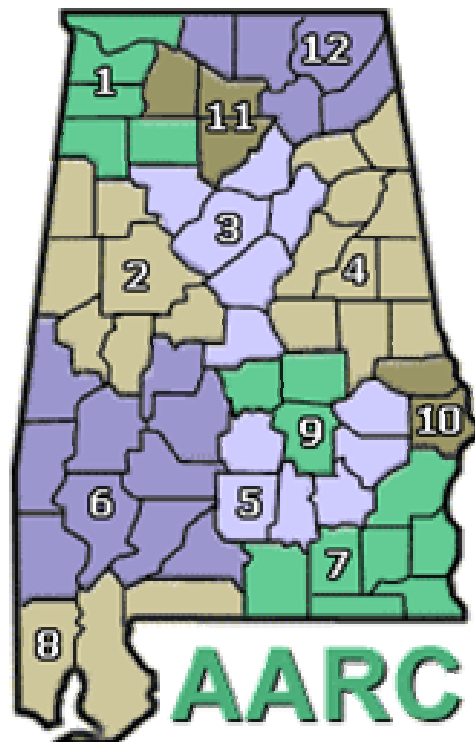
- Funding for local plan development;
- Technical assistance to local plan preparers;
- A State review process for draft documents; and
- Coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on local plan development and review issues.

AEMA funded and oversaw the development of these local Hazard Mitigation plans through agreements with the 12 Regional Planning Councils (RPCs) and local emergency management agency (EMAs) directors within the State of Alabama. The Regional Planning Councils were chosen to assist in this process because of their established planning expertise, knowledge of local and regional issues within their jurisdictions, and their rapport with local county and city representatives and stakeholders. The jurisdictions of the 12 RPCs cover all 67 counties within the State. The 12 regions are depicted in **Figure 7.2-1**. Based on these agreements, individual RPCs produced a significant number of the local plans. In instances where an RPC was not

involved, AEMA entered into an agreement directly with the local EMA to develop the plan. **Table 7.2-1** lists each of the 12 regions in the Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC), the associated counties and the responsible party for the development of local plans.

At the time that the initial State Plan was approved and adopted, no local hazard mitigation plans had been completed. At the start of the plan update process, 64 counties had adopted FEMA approved mitigation plans; one county (Chambers) had an approvable plan that was still undergoing the plan approval/adoption process; one county (Lowndes) was revising its plan to incorporate comments from FEMA; and one county (Bullock) is expected to submit its initial plan to AEMA for review at the end of June 2007. **Table 7.2-1** also includes the status of each plan as of June 15, 2007. AEMA is prepared to provide technical assistance to both Bullock and Lowndes Counties upon request.

Figure 7.2-1
Alabama Association of Regional Councils:
Areas Covered by Regional Planning Councils



**Table 7.2-1
Summary of Development of
Local Hazard Mitigation Plans**

Alabama Association of Regional Councils			Responsible Entity for Local Plan Development
Region	Council Name/Counties	Plan Status as of June 15, 2007	
1	Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments		
	Colbert	Approved – December 1, 2004	Regional Planning Council
	Franklin	Approved – February 5, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Lauderdale	Approved – March 31, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Marion	Approved – June 30, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Winston	Approved – March 18, 2005	Regional Planning Council
2	West Alabama Planning and Development Council		
	Bibb	Approved – March 18, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Fayette	Approved – March 8, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Greene	Approved – March 8, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Hale	Approved – March 17, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Lamar	Approved – March 2, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Pickens	Approved – March 17, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Tuscaloosa	Approved – March 15, 2005	Regional Planning Council
3	Birmingham Regional Planning Commission		
	Blount	Approved – June 30, 2005	Local EMA
	Chilton	Approved – May 4, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Jefferson	Approved – June 22, 2004	Local EMA
	Shelby	Approved – March 2, 2005	Local EMA
	St. Clair	Approved – December 4, 2004	Local EMA
	Walker	Approved – April 25, 2005	Regional Planning Council
4	East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission		
	Calhoun	Approved – February 5, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Chambers	<i>Approvable pending adoption</i>	Regional Planning Council
	Cherokee	Approved – March 5, 2005	Local EMA
	Clay	Approved – March 1, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Cleburne	Approved – March 1, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Coosa	Approved – March 28, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Etowah	Approved – March 3, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Randolph	Approved – March 15, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Talladega	Approved – March 4, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Tallapoosa	Approved – March 27, 2005	Regional Planning Council
5	South Central Alabama Development Commission		
	Bullock	<i>Plan not yet submitted</i>	Regional Planning Council
	Butler	Approved – March 22, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Crenshaw	Approved – February 8, 2005	Local EMA
	Lowndes	<i>Needs revision</i>	Regional Planning Council
	Macon	Approved – March 23, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Pike	Approved – October 24, 2005	Regional Planning Council
6	Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission		
	Choctaw	Approved – July 1, 2005	Local EMA
	Clarke	Approved – December 7, 2004	Regional Planning Council
	Conecuh	Approved – March 4, 2005	Local EMA
	Dallas	Approved – January 17, 2005	Local EMA
	Marengo	Approved – February 1, 2005	Regional Planning Council

**Table 7.2-1
Summary of Development of
Local Hazard Mitigation Plans**

Alabama Association of Regional Councils			Responsible Entity for Local Plan Development
Region	Council Name/Counties	Plan Status as of June 15, 2007	
	Monroe	Approved – March 18, 2005	Local EMA
	Perry	Approved – March 3, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Sumter	Approved – March 8, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Washington	Approved – March 1, 2005	Local EMA
	Wilcox	Approved – March 31, 2005	Regional Planning Council
7	Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Council		
	Barbour	Approved – March 22, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Coffee	Approved – March 1, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Covington	Approved – March 18, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Dale	Approved – March 1, 2005	Local EMA
	Geneva	Approved – April 25, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Henry	Approved – July 25, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Houston	Approved – June 30, 2005	Regional Planning Council
8	South Alabama Regional Planning Commission		
	Baldwin	Approved – February 2, 2005	Local EMA
	Escambia	Approved – April 4, 2005	Local EMA
	Mobile	Approved – July 14, 2005	Local EMA
9	Central Alabama Regional Planning Development Commission		
	Autauga	Approved – April 22, 2005	Local EMA
	Elmore	Approved – January 27, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Montgomery	Approved – January 26, 2005	Local EMA
10	Lee-Russell Council of Governments		
	Lee	Approved – March 23, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Russell	Approved – January 27, 2005	Regional Planning Council
11	North-Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments		
	Cullman	Approved – March 8, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Lawrence	Approved – February 21, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Morgan	Approved – March 8, 2005	Local EMA
12	Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments		
	DeKalb	Approved – March 31, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Jackson	Approved – May 27, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Limestone	Approved – April 25, 2005	Regional Planning Council
	Madison	Approved – December 8, 2004	Local EMA
	Marshall	Approved – July 12, 2004	Local EMA

Source: Alabama Local Hazard Mitigation Plans Inventory 05/25/07; FEMA

To further the working relationship between AEMA, the State Hazard Mitigation Team (SHMT) and the AARC, as well as to provide coordination between the ongoing and parallel planning efforts between the State and the local counties, the Director of the AARC is a member of the SHMT. The AARC and its Director serve as a conduit for the distribution of information in both directions to facilitate an open dialog and the sharing of data and resources that ultimately led to the smooth integration of local and state planning efforts.

As previously noted, the RPCs and local EMAs received funding to produce the county level hazard mitigation plans from the AEMA. The State provided funding assistance for development of the 67 county plans through three funding programs: Pre-Disaster Mitigation

(PDM) Grants, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program 7 percent (HMGP) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The funding breakdown follows:

- 28 Plans funded through PDM Grants;
- 23 Plans funded through the HMGP; and
- 16 Plans funded through a combination of HMGP and CDBG funds.

In January 2004, the AARC established the All-Hazards Task Force (AHTF), an entity comprised of representatives from each of the 12 Regional Councils and AEMA. The purpose of the Task Force is to coordinate local mitigation planning efforts across the State. The group exchanges information, knowledge and experiences regarding local plan development. AEMA actively participated in the AHTF providing ongoing technical assistance to the RPCs and attending meetings.

In addition to funding, the State AEMA provided significant technical assistance to local plan preparers. Prior to and initial during the development of the local plans, the State conducted Hazard Mitigation Planning Workshops throughout the State of Alabama. During the plan development process, AEMA representatives provided technical assistance via telephone to RPC/ local EMA staff to answer questions and provide assistance on the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 guidelines and the hazard mitigation planning process. AEMA visited each of the RPCs to conduct face to face meetings, provide technical assistance, and answer questions regarding the hazard mitigation plan development process.

In addition to funding and technical assistance, AEMA provided a State review process and timeframe for draft local plan development. The State reviewed each of the county plans for applicability to the IFR requirements prior to FEMA's formal review. The process and timeframe employed by the State for review is:

- Step 1: The initial draft of a local county plan is sent to the AEMA for review within a 30 day timeframe and then forwarded with AEMA comments to FEMA.
- Step 2: FEMA completes its review within 45 days and forwards their comments to AEMA. AEMA immediately forwards AEMA and FEMA review comments to the County.
- Step 3: The County has a 30-day period to address both AEMA and FEMA comments. The County submits the corrected final draft to the AEMA.
- Step 4: Within 30 days, the AEMA checks the corrected final draft and forwards it to FEMA for review of corrections.
- Step 5: FEMA completes its second review within 45 days and if all comments were satisfactorily addressed in the corrected final draft of the plan, a letter stating that the plan is adoptable is mailed to AEMA and the County. In the cases where comments have not been addressed satisfactorily, the County again addresses the comments and repeats the process, thereby delaying the timeframe for approval and adoption.
- Step 6: The Plan is then formally adopted by all participating jurisdictions within the County within a reasonable period that allows for local review, public participation, legal notices, public hearings, and governing body adoptions. The local adoption process should be completed within a 30 to 60-day timeframe.
- Step 7: The Plan is officially approved. The timeframe from the County's submission of the initial draft plan to adoption of the final approved plan can take over 210 days to complete.

Throughout the development and review process, AEMA served as a liaison between FEMA and the local jurisdictions. In addition, AEMA utilized this review process early on to inform the development of the statewide risk assessment and mitigation strategy. This is discussed further in **Section 7.3.1**.

AEMA continues to provide technical assistance and review to the two counties working to complete their initial hazard mitigation plans.

7.2.2 Update of Local Hazard Mitigation Plans

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA2K) and the IFR require local hazard mitigation plans to be updated every five years in order for the local jurisdiction to remain eligible for mitigation funds. The first of the initial plans was approved and adopted in 2004 indicating that the first updates would not be required until 2009. However, a majority of counties have already initiated the plan update process in an effort to try to incorporate lessons learned from the recent disasters. The counties are working to improve their risk assessments and strengthen their mitigation strategies. **Table 7.2-2**, below, summarizes local efforts to update their plans.

Table 7.2-2
Summary of Status of Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
Updates as of June 15, 2007

Alabama Association of Regional Councils			Responsible Entity for Local Plan Development
Region	Council Name/Counties	Status of Funding as of June 15, 2007	
1	Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments		
	Colbert	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Franklin	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Lauderdale	Applied for 1605-HMGP Funds	Local EMA
	Marion	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Winston	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
2	West Alabama Planning and Development Council		
	Bibb	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Fayette	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Greene	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Hale	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Lamar	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Pickens	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Tuscaloosa	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
3	Birmingham Regional Planning Commission		
	Blount	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
	Chilton	Applied for 1605-HMGP Funds	Local EMA
	Jefferson	Applied for 1605-HMGP Funds	Local EMA
	Shelby	Received PDM pre-award letter	Local EMA
	St. Clair	Applied for 1605-HMGP Funds	Local EMA
	Walker	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
4	East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission		
	Calhoun	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Chambers	<i>Initial plan not yet approved</i>	N/A
	Cherokee	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Clay	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council

Table 7.2-2
Summary of Status of Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
Updates as of June 15, 2007

Alabama Association of Regional Councils			Responsible Entity for Local Plan Development
Region	Council Name/Counties	Status of Funding as of June 15, 2007	
	Cleburne	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Coosa	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Etowah	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Randolph	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Talladega	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Tallapoosa	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
5	South Central Alabama Development Commission		
	Bullock	<i>Initial Plan not yet approved</i>	N/A
	Butler	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Crenshaw	1549-HMGP Funds Approved	Local EMA
	Lowndes	<i>Initial Plan not yet approved</i>	N/A
	Macon	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Pike	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
6	Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission		
	Choctaw	1549-HMGP Funds Approved	Local EMA
	Clarke	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Conecuh	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Dallas	Applied for 1605-HMGP Funds	Local EMA
	Marengo	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Monroe	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
	Perry	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Sumter	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Washington	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
	Wilcox	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
7	Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Council		
	Barbour	Applied for 1605-HMGP Funds	Local EMA
	Coffee	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Covington	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Dale	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
	Geneva	Applied for 1605-HMGP Funds	Local EMA
	Henry	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Houston	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
8	South Alabama Regional Planning Commission		
	Baldwin	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
	Escambia	Applied for 1605-HMGP Funds	Local EMA
	Mobile	Applied for 1605-HMGP Funds	Local EMA
9	Central Alabama Regional Planning Development Commission		
	Autauga	1549-HMGP Funds Approved	Local EMA
	Elmore	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
	Montgomery	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
10	Lee-Russell Council of Governments		
	Lee	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
	Russell	1605-HMGP Funds Approved	Regional Planning Council
11	North-Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments		
	Cullman	Applied for 1605-HMGP Funds	Local EMA
	Lawrence	Not yet applied for funding	N/A

**Table 7.2-2
Summary of Status of Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
Updates as of June 15, 2007**

Alabama Association of Regional Councils			Responsible Entity for Local Plan Development
Region	Council Name/Counties	Status of Funding as of June 15, 2007	
	Morgan	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
12	Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments		
	DeKalb	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
	Jackson	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
	Limestone	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
	Madison	Not yet applied for funding	N/A
	Marshall	Not yet applied for funding	N/A

As of June 15, 2007, 48 counties are working towards completing plan updates. FEMA has approved funds for 37 of these while the remaining 11 have submitted applications for funds that have not yet been approved. Three counties are still working to get their initial plans approved by FEMA. Currently, AEMA is coordinating with the AHTF to encourage the remaining 16 counties to update their plans in light of the recent disasters while there is still ample HMGP funding available. AEMA will provide technical assistance to the counties proceeding with their plan updates. In addition, AEMA will work with the counties that have not yet applied for funding to identify potential funding sources and to develop a schedule for the update process.

In addition, as part of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan Update process, AEMA is reviewing each local plan for incorporation into the State Plan (**See Section 7.3**). As part of this plan review, AEMA will develop recommendations, processes, and methodologies that may assist local plan developers in improving the usefulness and effectiveness of the local mitigation plans.

7.3 Process for Reviewing, Coordinating and Linking the State and Local Plans

This section provides a description of the state's process and timeframe for reviewing, coordinating, and linking local plans to the state plan during the initial plan development process and the ongoing plan update process as well as plans to ensure that this coordination continues into the future.

7.3.1 Review and Incorporation of Local Plan Information into Initial State Plan

In the development of the State Plan, AEMA was aware of the importance on-going local planning efforts and the need for the State Plan to be reflective of the local plans. The process utilized in the development of the initial State Plan builds upon local risks, goals, strategies and actions to encompass the range of hazards, mitigation strategies and actions identified across the entire State of Alabama. As previously discussed in **Section 7.2**, the initial State and local plans were developed concurrently causing very few local plans to be available for review. To compensate for this, the team utilized three methods to ensure that the State Plan was coordinated with and linked to the local plans.

1. A questionnaire was sent to the RPCs and local EMAs (responsible for developing the local plans);
2. A sampling of local plans were reviewed;
3. Coordination with the All Hazard Task Force (AHTF) and the Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC); and
4. Public Meetings.

Local Questionnaire

The local plan questionnaire was developed and distributed to all 67 counties in March 2004. As of the June 1, 2004 deadline, 31 responses were received. The responses were used to acquire an understanding of local risk assessments and local mitigation strategies and actions. To accomplish this, the responses from the questions relevant to risk assessment and mitigation strategies were analyzed and utilized to develop a general idea of the hazards that affect the State and the associated risks, as well as the mitigation actions and strategies being considered by local governments to mitigate those risks.

Evaluation of Local Plans

Following the review and analysis of the questionnaire responses in 2004, AEMA reviewed the five local plans that were best developed at the time. These were:

- Baldwin County;
- Jefferson County;
- Madison County;
- Mobile County; and
- Washington County.

These counties represented major state population centers and associated risks and mitigation actions. The review and analysis of the sample local plans were then compared to the questionnaire analysis. The team developed a summary of local hazards and risks throughout the State as well as a summary of mitigation goals, strategies, and actions considered in the local plan development process. The results were utilized as the basis for the statewide hazard identification and risk analysis, as well as the development of the statewide mitigation goals, strategy, and actions. This ensured that the State Plan was reflective of the local plans, even though the local plans were still under development.

Coordination with All-Hazards Task Force

As discussed in **Section 7.2**, a large majority of the local plans were developed through the 12 Regional Planning Councils of the State. The Director of the AARC was included as part of the SHMT and served as a conduit for information sharing between the locals and the State to ensure that the State Plan incorporated information from local planning efforts and local plans were being developed in coordination with the State Plan in 2004. The AHTF also facilitated coordination by allowing local and State planners to share information and maintain an open dialogue regarding local and statewide risks and potential mitigation strategies.

Public Meetings

In addition to the above noted process, AEMA sponsored a series of public meetings across the State to discuss the results of the State planning efforts. Meetings were scheduled for the following cities:

- Mobile; June 21, 2004;
- Montgomery; June 22, 2004;
- Huntsville; June 23, 2004; and
- Birmingham; June 24, 2004.

The meetings had two objectives:

- Involve the public in the State process; and
- To obtain concurrence and/or feedback on the information garnered from the local plan reviews.

7.3.2 Review and Incorporation of Local Plan Information into the State Plan Update

While the activities described in **Section 7.3.1** ensured that the initial State Plan reflected local hazards, strategies, prevailing conditions, and funding issues, the timing of submission deadlines required the State to submit its plan prior to the completion of local plans. The initial state plan called for AEMA to develop a process to review local plans after approval by FEMA and incorporate germane elements into the State Plan. AEMA reviewed each local hazard mitigation plan prior to submission to FEMA for final approval; the extraction of germane elements from the local plans for incorporation into the state plan was necessarily delayed by the hurricanes that impacted the State in 2004 and 2005. This process did not begin until the State began its plan update process in March 2007 and is therefore not entirely complete at this time. The following describes the accomplishments of AEMA to date, and strategies to further these efforts.

Starting in March 2007, AEMA reviewed all local plans that had been submitted. This included 64 FEMA-approved local hazard mitigation plans, one plan that had been deemed approvable pending adoption by the local government (Chambers) and one plan that had been returned to the county for revisions (Lowndes). Bullock County is expected to submit its draft plan to AEMA in June 2007, at which time AEMA will review the plan and incorporate pertinent information into the State Plan accordingly.

The AEMA review of local plans focused on three main areas:

1. Hazard identification and profiles
2. Potential loss estimates
3. Mitigation strategies, goals, and actions

The purpose of this review was to cross-check its own hazard data with those of the local risk assessments and to ensure that its mitigation strategy reflected those of the local mitigation strategies. In addition, AEMA utilized this opportunity to identify areas where local plans can be

improved during the local plan updates. The following describes the methodology used to review the local plans and a summary of the results.

Hazard Identification and Profiles

AEMA reviewed the hazard identification and profile sections of the 66 available local hazard mitigation plans. These available plans include the 64 counties with FEMA approved plans, one county whose plan has been designated by FEMA as “approvable pending adoption,” and one plan that is working to incorporate comments from FEMA. The range of hazards identified in the plans varied greatly, as did the criteria used by each county to identify and profile hazards. An initial review was conducted to identify all hazards mentioned in the local plans. These included:

- Flood
- Tornado
- Windstorm / High Winds
- Hurricane
- Winter Storm
- Landslide
- Sinkhole and Land Subsidence
- Earthquake
- Drought
- Hail
- Wildfire
- Extreme Temperatures
- Lightning
- Dam Failure
- HazMat
- Extreme Temperatures
- Manmade Hazards (Terrorists, Radiological, Fire)
- Avalanche
- Tsunami
- Volcano
- Typhoon
- Soil / Coastal Erosion
- Coastal Storm

AEMA refined this list to reflect the hazards that were common throughout the plans. For instance, HazMat incidents, manmade hazards, and soil/coastal erosion were very rarely discussed in the local plans, so they were eliminated from further discussion. All plans state that they were not impacted by volcanoes, typhoons, and avalanches; these hazards were removed from the list. All plans that mentioned coastal storms combined them with hurricanes; coastal storms were removed accordingly. The resulting list was nearly identical to the list of hazards profiled in the 2004 State Plan. The local plans were reviewed again to determine which hazards are identified, profiled, and have the potential to impact them on a county by county basis. Because of the inconsistency of the type of data provided, more specific information from the hazard profiles (i.e. location, extent, probability, etc) could not be extracted. The results of this review are summarized in **Table 7.3-1** below which shows the hazards that impact each county.

Table 7.3-1
Summary of Review of Local Hazard Identification and Profiles

COUNTY	FL	TOR	HW	HU	WS	LS	S&S	EQ	DR	HAIL	WF	ET	LT	DF	TS
Autauga	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Baldwin	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Barbour	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Bibb	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Blount	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Bullock	Plan Not Yet Submitted														
Butler	●	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●		

Table 7.3-1
Summary of Review of Local Hazard Identification and Profiles

COUNTY	FL	TOR	HW	HU	WS	LS	S&S	EQ	DR	HAIL	WF	ET	LT	DF	TS
Calhoun	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Chambers	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Cherokee	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Chilton	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Choctaw	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Clarke	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●		
Clay	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	
Cleburne	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	
Coffee	●	●	●	●											
Colbert	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Conecuh	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Coosa	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	
Covington	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Crenshaw	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Cullman	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●		●	●		
Dale	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●		●	
Dallas	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
DeKalb	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		
Elmore	●	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●		
Escambia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Etowah	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Fayette	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Franklin	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Geneva	●	●	●	●	●			●						●	
Greene	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Hale	●	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	
Henry	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Houston	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●			●	
Jackson	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Jefferson	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Lamar	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●		
Lauderdale	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Lawrence	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●		
Lee	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	
Limestone	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		
Lowndes	●	●	●	●			●		●	●	●		●		
Macon	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Madison	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Marengo	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	
Marion	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Marshall	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Mobile	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Monroe	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Montgomery	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Morgan	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●		
Perry	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●		
Pickens	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Pike	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		
Randolph	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	
Russell	●	●	●	●	●				●		●	●	●	●	

Table 7.3-1
Summary of Review of Local Hazard Identification and Profiles

COUNTY	FL	TOR	HW	HU	WS	LS	S&S	EQ	DR	HAIL	WF	ET	LT	DF	TS
St. Clair	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Shelby	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Sumter	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	
Talladega	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	
Tallapoosa	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	
Tuscaloosa	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Walker	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Washington	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Wilcox	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	
Winston	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
TOTALS	66	66	66	66	64	50	43	53	59	56	57	62	57	53	1

Notes: FL=Flood; TOR=Tornados; HW = High Wind and Windstorms; HU=Hurricane; WS=Winter Storms; LS=Landslides; S&S=Subsidence and Sinkholes; EQ=Earthquake; DR=Drought; HAIL=Hail; WF=Wildfire; ET=Extreme Temperatures; LT=Lighting; DF=Dam Failure; TS=Tsunamis

These results were incorporated into **Section 5.2** of this plan update.

Potential Loss Estimates

AEMA conducted an initial review of the loss estimates contained in each local plan to identify common elements that could be extracted and incorporated into this plan update. The initial review indicated that the local plan developers used a wide range of methodologies to determine these potential loss estimates and were only able to include loss estimates for hazards for which there was ample historical data. Typically, these hazards were tornadoes, flooding, high winds / windstorms, and hurricanes. In addition, a number of plans included loss estimates in terms of dollar losses per event as opposed to dollar losses per year. Therefore, each plan was reviewed again to extract the potential annual loss estimates, or projected annual losses, for each of these hazards. The results of this review are summarized in **Table 7.3-2** below. All figures were converted to dollar losses per year by the plan reviewers.

Table 7.3-2
Projected Annual Loss Estimates from
Available Local Plan Risk Assessments

County	Flood	Hurricane	Tornado	Winds
Autauga	\$60,452	\$380,000	\$281,577	\$281,577
Baldwin	\$180,000	\$26,200,000	\$162,188	\$40,770
Barbour	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bibb	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$750,000
Blount	\$29,600		\$105,000	\$46,000
Bullock	Plan not yet submitted			
Butler	\$15,557	n/a	\$19,113	\$5,245
Calhoun	\$4,565	\$4,480	\$64,634	\$64,634
Chambers	n/a	n/a	\$110,300	\$73,272
Cherokee	\$26,625	n/a	\$72,250	\$37,000
Chilton	\$19,320	n/a	\$462,715	n/a
Choctaw	\$96,000	n/a	\$9,000	\$101,250
Clarke	\$65,833	n/a	\$112,052	\$11,382
Clay	\$16,423	\$31,194	\$487,166	n/a

Table 7.3-2
Projected Annual Loss Estimates from
Available Local Plan Risk Assessments

County	Flood	Hurricane	Tornado	Winds
Cleburne	\$11,320	\$65,672	\$33,333	\$5,509
Coffee	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Colbert	\$64,600	n/a	\$68,485	\$23,850
Conecuh	\$79,250	n/a	\$25,300	\$39,550
Coosa	\$1,200	\$65,672	\$37,320	\$55,980
Covington	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Crenshaw	\$81,000	n/a	\$73,000	\$60,785
Cullman	\$81,250	n/a	\$2,048	\$3,296
Dale	n/a	n/a	\$836,458	\$10,226
Dallas	\$14,400	n/a	\$322,000	\$1,037,00
DeKalb	n/a	n/a	\$1,051,055	\$285,042
Elmore	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Escambia	\$220,428	n/a	\$21,511	\$54,430
Etowah	\$7,660	\$105,263	\$125,640	\$349,000
Fayette	\$200,000	n/a	\$500,000	\$90,000
Franklin	\$27,500	n/a	\$27,571	\$24,524
Geneva	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Greene	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$1,000,000	\$25,000
Hale	\$45,000	\$150,000	\$50,000	\$120,000
Henry	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Houston	\$1,062,500	\$8,275,862	\$366,852	\$366,852
Jackson	n/a	n/a	\$676,404	\$177,644
Jefferson	\$1,037,000	n/a	\$5,300,000	\$73,650
Lamar	\$28,000	\$50,000	\$400,000	\$25,000
Lauderdale	\$4,703,750	n/a	\$168,071	\$42,623
Lawrence	\$14,040	n/a	\$79,840	\$47,000
Lee	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Limestone	\$113,734	n/a	\$1,106,529	\$202,204
Lowndes	\$2,855	n/a	\$11,231	\$4,782
Macon	\$1,333	n/a	\$14,685	\$7,019
Madison	\$265,833	n/a	\$10,000,000	\$98,260
Marengo	\$19,000	n/a	\$51,583	\$2,912
Marion	\$19,250	n/a	\$898,920	\$216,576
Marshall	\$26,625	n/a	\$72,250	\$37,000
Mobile	\$180,333	\$26,200,000	\$88,615	\$42,667
Monroe	\$4,300	n/a	\$74,000	\$108,000
Montgomery	\$45,000	n/a	\$260,000	\$96,500
Morgan	\$3,420	n/a	\$313,212	\$27,898
Perry	\$4,250	n/a	\$276,316	\$2,143
Pickens	\$100,000	\$2,000	\$500,000	\$52,000
Pike	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Randolph	\$67,375	\$110,526	\$231,250	\$231,250
Russell	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
St. Clair	\$41,889	n/a	\$917,605	\$18,692
Shelby	\$41,889	n/a	\$612,846	\$32,695
Sumter	\$172,500	n/a	\$238,333	\$4,050
Talladega	\$225,926	\$105,263	\$155,760	\$155,760
Tallapoosa	\$1,880	\$88,000	\$244,083	\$24,555

Table 7.3-2
Projected Annual Loss Estimates from
Available Local Plan Risk Assessments

County	Flood	Hurricane	Tornado	Winds
Tuscaloosa	\$25,000	\$2,235	\$1,320,000	\$17,880
Walker	\$64,000	n/a	\$68,485	\$23,850
Washington	\$30,000	n/a	\$12,242	\$606,000
Wilcox	\$5,400	n/a	\$2,931	\$3,116
Winston	\$36,667	n/a	\$336,308	\$22,824

Note: n/a indicates that information was not available in the local plans and should not be taken to mean that that the jurisdiction is not vulnerable to the hazard.

These results were incorporated into **Section 5.5** of this plan update.

Mitigation Goals and Actions

Lastly, AEMA reviewed the mitigation strategy, goals, and actions of each of the local plans. Plan reviewers reviewed each of the local plans to determine if the actions in the local plan met the goals as defined in the State Plan and conversely, to determine if the State hazard mitigation goals were reflective of local goals, objectives and actions. The State hazard mitigation goals (see **Section 6.3**) are as follows:

- Goal 1 – Establish a comprehensive statewide hazard mitigation system.
- Goal 2 – Reduce the State of Alabama’s risk from natural hazards.
- Goal 3 – Reduce vulnerability of new and future development.
- Goal 4 – Reduce the State of Alabama’s vulnerability to natural hazards.
- Goal 5 – Foster public support and acceptance of hazard mitigation.
- Goal 6 – Establish interagency hazard mitigation cooperation.

Table 7.3-3 below summarizes the results of this review.

Table 7.3-3
Review of Local Goals and Actions
in Terms of State Goals

COUNTY	GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5	GOAL 6
Autauga	•	•		•	•	
Baldwin	•	•	•	•	•	•
Barbour	•	•		•	•	•
Bibb	•	•		•	•	
Blount	•	•	•	•	•	
Bullock	Plan not yet submitted					
Butler	•	•	•	•	•	•
Calhoun	•	•		•		
Chambers	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cherokee	•	•	•	•	•	
Chilton	•	•	•	•	•	•
Choctaw	•	•	•	•	•	
Clarke	•	•		•	•	
Clay	•	•		•		
Cleburne	•	•		•	•	

**Table 7.3-3
Review of Local Goals and Actions
in Terms of State Goals**

COUNTY	GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5	GOAL 6
Coffee	•	•	•	•		
Colbert	•	•	•	•	•	•
Conecuh	•	•	•	•	•	
Coosa	•	•		•	•	
Covington	•	•	•	•	•	•
Crenshaw	•	•	•	•	•	
Cullman	•	•		•	•	
Dale	•	•	•	•	•	
Dallas	•	•	•	•	•	
DeKalb	•	•	•	•	•	•
Elmore	•	•	•	•	•	•
Escambia	•	•	•	•	•	
Etowah	•	•		•	•	
Fayette	•	•		•	•	
Franklin	•	•	•	•	•	•
Geneva	•	•	•	•	•	•
Greene	•	•		•	•	
Hale	•	•		•	•	
Henry	•	•		•		
Houston	•	•	•	•		
Jackson	•	•	•	•	•	•
Jefferson	•	•	•	•	•	
Lamar	•	•		•	•	
Lauderdale	•	•	•	•	•	•
Lawrence	•	•		•	•	
Lee	•	•	•	•	•	•
Limestone	•	•	•	•	•	•
Lowndes	•	•	•	•	•	•
Macon	•	•	•	•	•	•
Madison	•	•	•	•	•	
Marengo	•	•		•	•	
Marion	•	•	•	•	•	•
Marshall	•	•	•	•	•	•
Mobile	•	•	•	•	•	•
Monroe	•	•	•	•	•	
Montgomery	•	•	•	•	•	
Morgan	•	•		•	•	
Perry	•	•		•	•	
Pickens	•	•		•	•	
Pike	•	•	•	•	•	•
Randolph	•	•		•	•	
Russell	•	•	•	•	•	•
St. Clair	•	•	•	•	•	
Shelby	•	•	•	•	•	
Sumter	•	•		•		
Talladega	•	•		•	•	
Tallapoosa	•	•		•	•	
Tuscaloosa	•	•		•	•	

Table 7.3-3
Review of Local Goals and Actions
in Terms of State Goals

COUNTY	GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5	GOAL 6
Walker	•	•	•	•	•	•
Washington	•	•	•	•	•	
Wilcox	•	•		•	•	
Winston	•	•	•	•	•	•

This review demonstrated the local mitigation goals, objectives and actions are consistent with the State mitigation goals; and conversely, that the State hazard mitigation goals are reflective of the local goal, objectives and actions.

7.3.3 Future Local Plan Review and Incorporation

The review and incorporation of local plan information during the development of the initial State Plan (**Section 7.3.1**), as well as this plan update (**Section 7.3.2**), has resulted in this plan update being reflective of local hazard, risks, goals, mitigation strategies and actions. However, these evolve over time. In addition, DMA2K and the IFR require local plans to be updated every five years. In fact, as discussed in **Section 7.2**, a number of local plans are currently being updated in light of the natural disasters that have occurred over the last three years.

Future state plan updates, which will be performed on a three-year cycle, will continue to incorporate the latest information regarding local risk assessment and mitigation actions into the state plan. The State is working to develop a system to continually track the information contained in the local plans so that it can be easily extracted and incorporated into State planning efforts. As part of this effort, AEMA will work to identify key elements of the local plans that can be “standardized,” allowing the type of information included in local plans to be more consistent and informative.

7.4 Criteria for Prioritizing Jurisdictions to Receive Funds under Existing Programs

Background

IFR subsection 201.4(c) (4) (iii) states that the State Hazard Mitigation Plan must include “criteria for prioritizing communities and local jurisdictions that would receive planning and project grants under available funding programs, which should include consideration for communities with the highest risk, repetitive loss properties, and most intense development pressures. Further, that for non-planning grants, a principal criterion for prioritizing grants shall be the extent to which benefits are maximized according to a cost benefit review of proposed projects and their associated costs.” The sub-sections below discuss these four criteria. Note that **Section 6.8.2** of the plan includes additional discussion of how the State intends to prioritize potential mitigation projects.

Applicants must demonstrate that their risk is sufficient to merit grant funds, particularly when compared to the project cost, but there is often considerable uncertainty in risk determinations. For this and other reasons, the State considers a variety of factors in addition to risk and benefit-cost (BC) analysis in determining its priorities for mitigation grants.

At the time of adoption of the initial State Plan in 2004, no formal procedures or criteria were in place to prioritize projects for funding. However, the State considered a variety of factors, such as local needs, vulnerability to natural hazards, NFIP status, CRS participation, risk to critical facility, and adopted regulatory tools, among others. The 2004 Plan recommended that a “more rigorous” process be developed. Following the State’s HMGP allocation under Hurricane Katrina (Federal Disaster Declaration 1605) in 2005, AEMA adopted an annex to the mitigation section of the State Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The annex to the State EOP established an HMGP Administrative Plan. The following excerpt from the Administrative Plan describes its scope and purposes:

This plan document has been incorporated as a separate annex to the mitigation section of the State Emergency Operation Plan and is the State of Alabama's process for administering the hazard mitigation grants funded under the provisions of Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), Public Law 100-707, as implemented by 44 CFR, Part 206. This Administrative Plan defines the eligibility criteria for an applicant, describes the application process, and outlines resources and procedures for management of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) projects and their associated program funding.

The Administrative Plan presents a process for review and prioritizing projects, as follows:

Applications... may be forwarded to the Project Application Review Committee (PARC) for technical review and prioritization. ...

- a. Jurisdictions with the highest risk;*
- b. Cost effectiveness of the project or action (usually through benefit-cost analysis);*
- c. Commitment of community to mitigation;*
- d. Inclusion of (flood) repetitive loss properties as identified through NFIP records;*
- e. Participation in Community Rating System (CRS);*
- f. Participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP);*
- g. Status of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan;*
- h. Consideration of long-term economic development;*
- i. Development pressure on the community;*
- j. Adoption and enforcement of zoning and building codes;*
- k. Priority of the project as identified in Local Hazard Mitigation Plan; and*
- l. General conformance with the mitigation strategy for reducing risk as identified in Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.*

As part of its effort to develop an enhanced hazard mitigation plan, the State is developing new criteria and standards to evaluate and prioritize projects. These new criteria will formalize a process to weigh a variety of established criteria to rank projects and strengthen methods and procedures for funding and be part of the State’s formal grant review process. As discussed in **Section 9**, AEMA and the SHMT will begin working on this, and other enhanced plan elements after approval of the Standard Plan Update.

7.4.1 Jurisdictions with Highest Risk

One of the primary purposes of this Plan is to identify the areas within Alabama with the highest risk of damage from natural hazards. As described in detail in the Risk Assessment (**Section 5**), a well-defined group of counties, mostly those with the greatest populations and numbers of structures (especially critical facilities), and those close to the Gulf coastline, are at the greatest risk.

Although the State does not have a formal system established to evaluate and prioritize potential mitigation projects on the basis of risk, this plan update is partly intended to identify those jurisdictions with the greatest risk. In general, the State will continue to direct mitigation grant funds to the areas with the highest risk. However, in many cases, more localized risk assessments (often produced in the local mitigation planning process), as well as risk assessments and BC analyses done in support of applications, could demonstrate many cases of high vulnerability outside the higher-risk counties identified in this plan.

Most successful mitigation projects are products of both risk and the effectiveness of a project in mitigating that risk. Although risk is clearly a good initial indicator of mitigation potential, the State will also carefully consider the cost effectiveness and the potential beneficial impacts of projects in determining funding priorities.

7.4.2 Repetitive Loss Properties

Although the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), Severe Repetitive Loss (SLR), and Repetitive Flood Claims (RFC) programs emphasize repetitive loss properties, FEMA currently has no formal requirement that grants funded through the HMGP or PDM address repetitive losses. However, in response to the Federal emphasis on reducing the burden of repetitive losses on the NFIP, the State presently considers the repetitive loss status of properties in determining the grants it will support (i.e. forward to FEMA for consideration and funding). As discussed earlier in this section, Alabama intends to seek Enhanced Plan status and, in so doing, develop a more rigorous process for evaluating grant proposals. As part of that effort, the State will incorporate repetitive loss status into its grant evaluation criteria. The FMA program and the new SLR and RFC programs mandate that grant funds be directed to NFIP repetitive loss properties, and the State will continue to comply with this requirement, as it has since the inception of the FMA program.

The National Flood Insurance Reform Act (NFIRA) of 2004 was signed into law by the President on June 30, 2004. NFIRA reforms the NFIP to create a disincentive to property owners to live in repetitively flooded areas. Rather than continue to rebuild, the program would provide repeatedly flooded homeowners assistance in either elevating or moving their homes away from flood waters. Those who refuse mitigation assistance would incur the long term losses associated with living in high risk areas.

7.4.3 Most Intense Development Pressure

As mentioned earlier in this section, at the time the initial version of this Plan was developed in 2004, Alabama had no formal process for evaluating potential mitigation grants. It has since developed a more rigorous review and recommendation process that includes development pressure as a review criterion. Development pressure is clearly a potential factor in any risk determination, however, development undertaken in accordance with effective comprehensive

planning and plan implementation tools, such as building codes, zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, floodplain management ordinances, and capital improvements programming should in many cases be less risky than existing developed areas. The State recognizes that increased development does cause new population settlements, construction of new buildings, and expansion of infrastructure. These development pressures could increase exposure of population, buildings, and infrastructure to the risks of natural hazards. Although development and growth are in themselves not risks, local mitigation planning fully integrated into a community's comprehensive planning and regulatory program can reduce exposure of new development to natural hazards risks. A community's planning responses to manage growth and development is essential to effective local mitigation, and these factors are carefully considered by the State in its project review process.

7.4.4 Maximizing Benefits According to Benefit-Cost Review of Local Projects

The regulations that apply to all FEMA mitigation grant programs require all mitigation projects to be cost effective. Under some pre-established conditions, certain projects may be exempt from this regulation, but in most cases projects are provided a benefit-cost analysis either prior to submission to AEMA and FEMA for funding consideration, or during the grant evaluation process. The PDM program, instituted in 2003/04, further emphasizes the role of cost effectiveness by making the benefit-cost ratio the single most important criterion in project rating and evaluation.

For the HMGP, FMA, SRL, and RFC programs, the regulations require only that proposed mitigation projects are cost-effective, not that they are the most cost-effective of projects that the State or FEMA is considering. In most cases, grant applications are either accompanied by a BC analysis, or AEMA or FEMA perform one in accordance with FEMA and OMB regulations. Projects that do not achieve the required 1.0 BC ratio and are not exempt from BC analysis are rejected from funding consideration. This is the case for all FEMA mitigation grant programs.

7.4.5 Prioritization of Communities to Receive Planning Grants

In determining priorities for which communities will receive mitigation planning grants, AEMA will consider the following criteria:

1. Quality and completeness of the community's existing mitigation plan. Communities whose mitigation plans need the most work will be given priority.
2. The degree of risk in the community, as determined by identifying the potential effects of natural hazards on population, buildings, and infrastructure.
3. Existing capability, (i.e. if the community resources to create or update its plan and to implement the plan).
4. Potential for the Plan to support or enhance community mitigation efforts.

These criteria consider the most important factors for determining the expenditure of limited funds to most effectively help communities improve their mitigation planning activities.

This page intentionally blank